DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 226 411 EA 015 324

AUTHOR Isherwood, Geoffrey B.
TITLE Leadership Effectiveness in Cooperative and Counteracting Groups.
PUB DATE Jul 82
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Congress of Applied Psychology (20th, Edinburgh, Scotland, July 24-30, 1982).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Behavior; *Conflict; *Cooperation; Elementary Secondary Education; *Leadership; Leadership Styles; Politics
IDENTIFIERS Consensus; *Leadership Effectiveness; *Situational Leadership Theory

ABSTRACT

Leadership effectiveness is related to leadership behavior in two types of situations, cooperative and counteractive. In cooperative situations, participants form an interactive group to solve a problem and usually develop shared goals. The leader decides whether to form a cooperative group, defines participants' level of involvement in decision-making (which can be authoritative, collegial, or consensus), and uses various problem-solving strategies. In a counteractive or conflict situation, distinct parties have different goals and tend to form coalitions, while party leaders seek bargaining power to have their subgroup goals met. In such a "political" situation leaders use political leadership behavior. Effective leaders, then, use the leadership behavior congruent with the situation: consensus behavior in cooperative situations and political behavior in counteractive situations. However, leaders can also try to alter the situation, for instance by trying to make a political situation into a cooperative one. (Author/RW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED226411

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Geoffrey B. Isherwood

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS IN COOPERATIVE AND COUNTERACTING GROUPS

Dr. Geoffrey B. Isherwood
McGill University
July 1982

A paper presented at the 20th International Congress of Applied Psychology, Edinburgh, Scotland.

EA 015 324

ABSTRACT

Leadership effectiveness is discussed in two distinct situations, one cooperative and the other counteractive. Participants in a cooperative group develop shared goals, leaders define levels of member involvement in decision making, and leaders use problem solving strategies to find a best solution. In contrast, participants in a counteractive group hold different goals and tend to form coalitions, while leaders seek bargaining power to have their subgroup goals met. Here, conflict is normal. Leadership effectiveness is different in the two settings, and the concept of dynamic leadership is developed as a mechanism to be employed by administrators who must work in both settings.

INTRODUCTION

> A grade six boy's baseball glove hits a florescent ceiling light in the hallway during noon recess. Miss Burke, a young teacher, takes the boy by the arm and demands an explanation. An exchange of words takes place followed by a brief scuffle resulting in marks on the student's neck. (The student is known as a troublemaker, and the teacher has no record of such prior incidents). After school an irate mother returns to school with her son in tow and enters the principal's office demanding the teacher's suspension for fighting with her son, marking his neck and bloodying his shirt.

A principal's response to such an incident is likely to fall into one of two categories. On the one hand he may see the situation as conflict laden, he may assume a neutral or combative stance against the parent, and he may deal with her concern only from the school institution's position. On the other hand, the principal may meet the parent with a "poised and friendly air that effectively discourages (her) definition of the situation as a personal quarrel."[1] He would give the woman time to vent her anger without himself accepting her view of the situation, and then move to defining action in a cooperative way, where together they - and perhaps the teacher in question - would find a common ground. The first response of the principal might be termed counteractive in that both parties remain on "opposite" sides, while the second might be termed cooperative as the principal tries to get both parties to join in finding a solution.[2]

The purpose of this paper is to consider leadership style and leadership behavior in two situations, one interactive and the other counteractive, and them to consider leadership effectiveness. A leader can be defined as a person

in a group who is elected, appointed, or who steps forward in an attempt to move the group toward some desired end. By leadership style I mean a personally preferred way of acting, whereas by leadership behavior, I mean what a person does, or does not do, in a specific action. Leader style is more etherial and abstract while leader behavior is specific, if complex. Leader style must be inferred, while leader behavior is observable. I assume that leader behavior is effected by situational phenomena, by the members of a group, by their personalities and objectives, by the history of the group, by its prior successes and its values, and by the context in which the group works. The effect of the situation on leader behavior is typically profound. Moreover, if a leader's behavior is congruent with his or her leadership style, I assume that positive sentiments are likely to be expressed by the leader. However, when behavior and style are not congruent then negative sentiments will likely be experienced. Leader sentiments may be most revealing about leader style.

I will not consider, in this paper, leader styles which are so dominating and powerful that they become immune to situational variations. In such cases I doubt that leadership is at work; in a sense leadership implies group or coalition acceptance or legitimation.

Two situations seem to dominate group behavior in organizations. In one case, individuals come together to define a common goal and seek a means to reach it. While individuals may disagree on some points, they, by and large, see their efforts as cooperative. A second situation involves individuals

who do not share a common goal. In fact, they may hold goals that are mutually exclusive. They form coalitions to gain influence, they develop a strategy and employ tactics to gain their goal. They see themselves in combat with the others. This situation is termed counteractive.

In North American educational circles individuals who display cooperative leadership styles are often, to the public and to many educators, honored. Cooperative activity is more highly valued. In contrast, conflict is commonly viewed by the public and educators as destructive and to be avoided. This personal and societal preference, I believe, has colored much of the discussion, research and theoretical work on leadership. It has led to extensive study of leadership in the cooperative situation and to limited investigation in the counteractive one. However, recent events in Canada and Quebec have led me to see virtue in studying leadership in both situations. School administrators are increasingly faced with both situations and, therefore, it is rational and reasonable to investigate both.

Let us now consider leadership in these two different situations. I will draw upon a few current writers' efforts and illustrate how leadership can be viewed in the two cases.

LEADERSHIP AND THE COOPERATIVE SITUATION

In a cooperative situation individuals form an interacting group in an attempt to solve a particular problem, resolve an emerging issue or develop

a new policy statement under the direction of a leader. Effectiveness in such a situation can be determined from three perspectives:[3]

Productivity - the extent to which the problem was solved.

Satisfaction - the extent to which an individual group member felt rewarded in problem solving.

Cohesion - the extent to which all group members gained a sense of value from cooperative problem solving.

Productivity is an "output" or "product" notion. It is related to the instrumental activity of a group. In contrast, satisfaction and cohesion are related to the expressive dimension of group work. They reflect personal and collective aspects of the affective side of a group. One can argue that to the extent each is achieved leadership is effective within the cooperative group.

In an interacting group, members pool their knowledge and seek a "best solution" to their problems. A person who holds a leadership style that is comfortable in such a situation is said to have a "Consensus Style." It is assumed that this style will optimize effectiveness because it will lead to both instrumental and expressive goal attainment.

More specifically, a leader working in a cooperative situation is confronted first with who should be involved in a problem solution and to what extent should they be involved? Secondly, how should the cooperative group function? Let me draw heavily here on the recent work of Vroom and Yetton.[4] Essentially, the "who" to involve question is a function of

considerations based in the "quality" of the alternative courses of action and the "acceptance" of the desired alternatives.

For example, suppose a principal had to be away from school for three weeks and she had to appoint an acting principal from among three vice-principals. From a "quality" perspective, if each vice-principal could perform the principal's job equally well, there would be no "qualitative" difference among her alternative choices. She could chose any vice-principal based on this criterion. However, if one vice-principal had long service while the other two were new to the position, there would likely be a qualitative difference between alternatives - the principal would rank alternatives - and she would make only one choice.

Going further, if the choice of one vice-principal over the others required the "acceptance" of other vice-principals, she would be inclined to involve them in the decision to gain their acceptance. If acceptance of her decision would not be questioned, she could make the selection alone (based on this criterion).

More specifically, Vroom and Yetton suggest seven basic questions related to "quality" and "acceptance" notions confronting a leader about to form a cooperative group. Each should be answered "yes or no", given a particular problem.[5]

Quality Questions:

1) Is there a quality requirement such that one solution is likely to be more rational than another?

2) Do I have sufficient information to make a high quality decision?

3) Is the problem structured? Do I know what information is needed and where to get it?

Acceptance Questions:

4) Is acceptance of the decision by subordinates critical to implementation?

5) If I were to make the decision by myself, is it reasonably certain that it would be accepted by my subordinates?

6) Do subordinates share the organizational goals to be obtained in solving this problem?

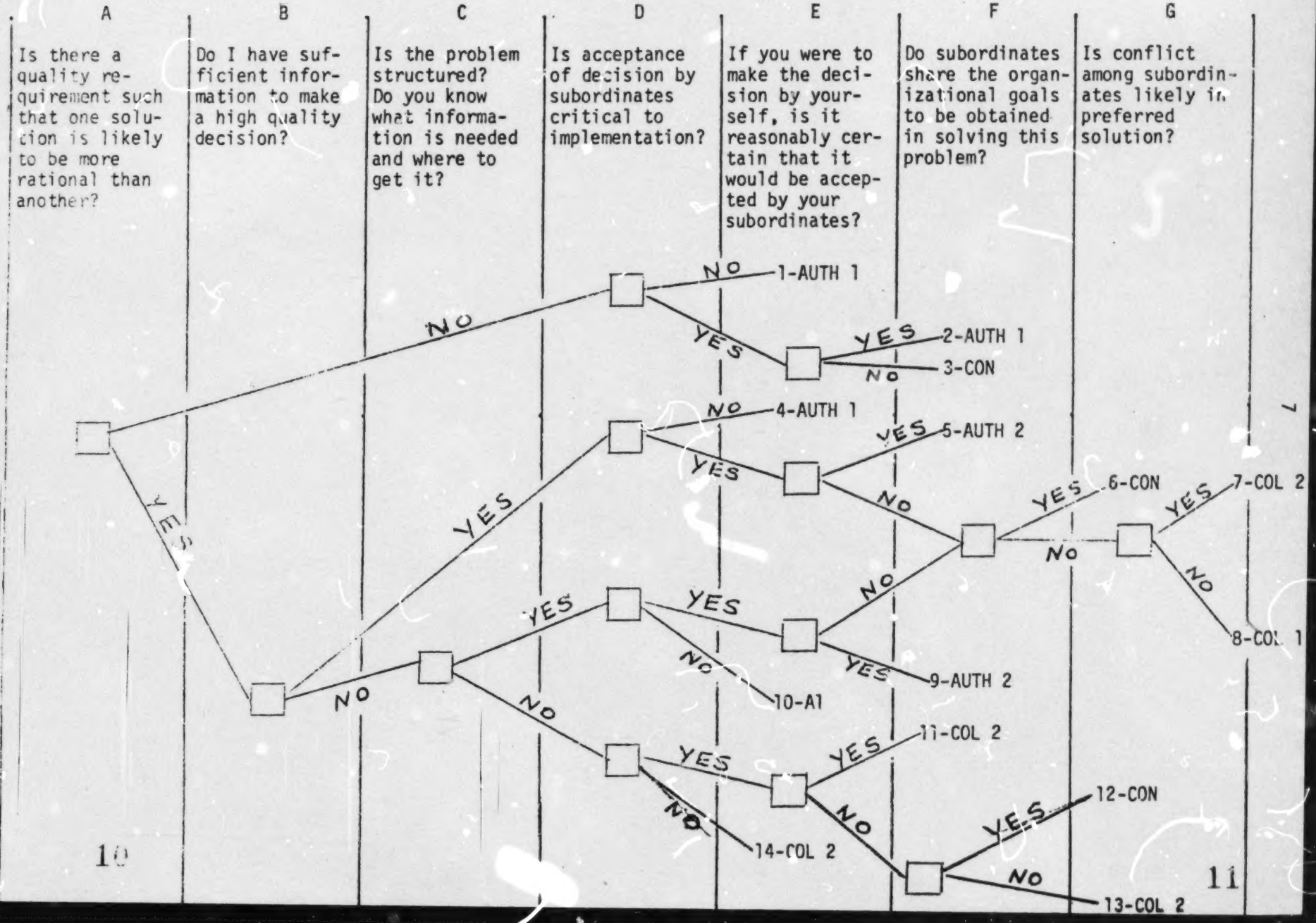
7) Is conflict among subordinates likely in preferred solution?

The following decision tree, relating the seven questions, leads to a specific type of interacting group. The interacting groups can be described as "authoritarian, collegial or concensus" (ranging from a low level to a high level of participation by members). See the decision tree.

TABLE 1

DECISION MAKING TREE[6]

Decision Process Flow Chart


A
Is there a quality requirement such that one solution is likely to be more rational than another?
B
Do I have sufficient information to make a high quality decision?
C
Is the problem structured? Do you know what information is needed and where to get it?
D
Is acceptance of decision by subordinates critical to implementation?
E
If you were to make the decision by yourself, is it reasonably certain that it would be accepted by your subordinates?
F
Do subordinates share the organizational goals to be obtained in solving this problem?
G
Is conflict among subordinates likely in preferred solution?
1-AUTH 1
2-AUTH 1
3-CON
4-AUTH 1
5-AUTH 2
6-CON
7-COL 2
8-COL 1
9-AUTH 2
10-A1
11-COL 2
12-CON
13-COL 2
14-COL 2
YES
NO

Having analyzed a particular issue by answering the seven questions, the leader is led to one of five levels of involvement for subordinates. The levels of involvement range from non-involvement (an authoritarian type of involvement) to delegating the decision to the concerned group. The five levels of cooperative activity are defined as:[7]

Authoritarian	(1)	Auth 1	You solve the problem or make the decision yourself, using information available to you at that time.
Authoritarian	(2)	Auth 2	You obtain the necessary information from your subordinate(s), then decide on the solution to the problem yourself. You may or may not tell your subordinates what the problem is in getting the information from them. The role played by your subordinates in making the decision is clearly one of providing the necessary information to you, rather than generating or evaluating alternative solutions.
Collegial	(1)	Col 1	You share the problem with relevant subordinates individually, getting their ideas and suggestions without brining them together as a group. Then you make the decision which may or may not reflect your subordinates' influence.
Collegial	(2)	Col 2	You share the problem with your subordinates as a group, collectively obtaining their ideas and suggestions. Then you make the decision which may or may not reflect your subordinates' influence.
Concensus		Con	You share a problem with your subordinates as a group. Together you generate and evaluate alternatives and attempt to reach agreement (concensus) on a solution. Your role is much like that of a chairman. You do not try to influence the group to adopt "your" solution and you are willing to accept and implement any solution which has the support of the entire group.

The reader can consider a specific problem, consider a possible work group, answer the seven questions, and then arrive at a best procedure for involving members in a decision. My point here is to illustrate one way, a rather detailed one, in which a leader can decide on who to involve in a decision in a cooperative group. The remaining issue is to consider the decision-making process a leader acting alone or a group might use in solving a problem.

A five-step decision-making process can be defined as:

1) Stating the Problem
2) Listing Alternative Solutions
3) Considering the Consequences of Each Alternative
4) Making a Selection Among Alternatives
5) Evaluating the Solution.

The first step, stating the problem, invites group members to articulate the problem at hand. Differing perspectives and individual values are likely to shape the agreed upon statements. Listing possible alternative solutions enables members to have a choice rather than attempting to act on a first stated alternative or on the alternative of a particular group member. This is essential in a democratic process. Group members then discuss both functional and dysfunctional consequences of each alternative. Depending on the type of group, Col l or Con, for example, a selection is then made among alternatives. After the decision has been implemented, evaluation takes place to insure desired outcomes. The acronym PACSE can be used to label the process.

The PACSE process is constrained by the concept of certainty. When the problem is clear, when all alternatives are set forth and the consequences of each alternative are explicit, then selection is virtually programmed. In contrast, where the problem is difficult to define, and/or where alternatives and consequences are, at best, vague, then selection is difficult. In such a situation "any action", "no action", or a "trial ballon (what if . . .)" would seem appropriate. Between conditions of "certainty" and "uncertainty" the leader or group is left to act on the best available information and evaluate closely and continuously.

Cooperative groups, working under conditions of limited certainty can expect to make some poor decisions. Therefore, the effectiveness of a group functioning under such conditions - in terms of productivity - should not be judged too harshly. One might conclude that a cooperative group could be ineffective in productivity (through no fault of its own) and yet have high levels of individual member satisfaction and a strong sense of cohesion. In fact, a cooperative group may develop high levels of cohesion, of banding together, when honest efforts have led to failure in terms of productivity.

Leadership effectiveness defined in terms of productivity, satisfaction and cohesion, therefore, seems to be a complex phenomena.

If one looks at the behavior of a leader in a cooperative situation certain actions are likely to facilitate effectiveness. First of all, the leader who can place a particular decision in perspective with the long-range goals of his group will likely develop more long-term group effectiveness.

Secondly, the leader who possesses tenacity and "stick-to-it-iveness", the leader who has thrust will likely motivate the group to concerted action.

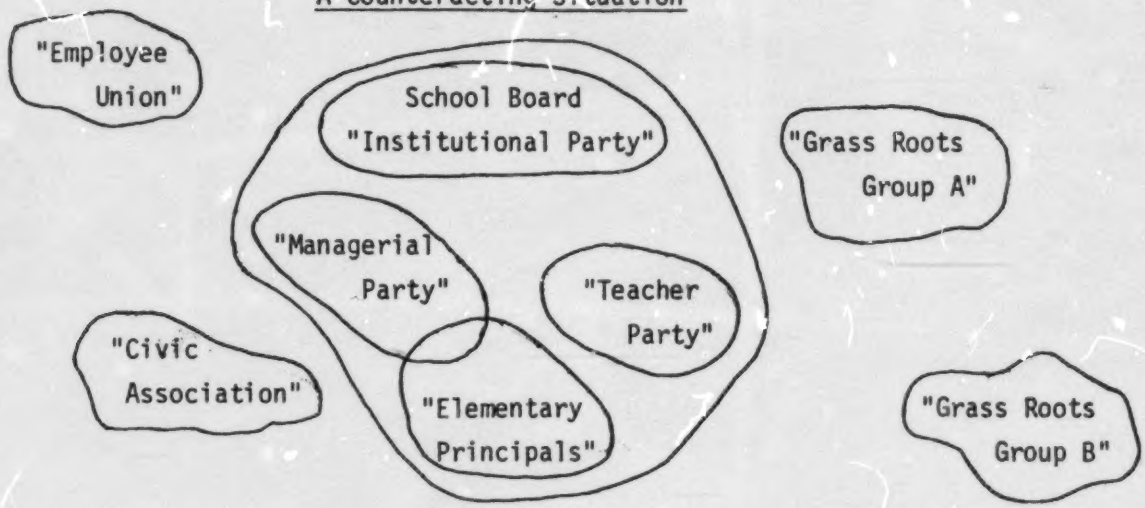
In summary, I have defined leadership effectiveness in the cooperative situation in terms of group productivity, satisfaction and cohesion; investigated how a cooperative group might develop as a leader defines "who" and "to what extent" members should be involved in a problem solving (PACSE) process; considered some complexities surrounding the notion of "certainty"; noted leader personal behavior and commented on leadership effectiveness.

LEADERSHIP AND THE CONFLICT SITUATION

In a conflict situation, there is no single group goal, but rather goals held by distinct parties. A party is an individual or more often a coalition of people who share a common goal. Invariably, one of the parties is a member of an institution (i.e., a school board) that has the jurisdiction to act on a particular issue. Other parties may be members of the community served, employee organizations (often unions), community groups, grass roots associations that emerge on a particular issue, or even groups of employees who share a common interest (i.e., elementary school principals). See Figure 1.

Figure 1

A Counteracting Situation[8]



The institutional party, the school board, for example, has to make a primary decision, as in the cooperative approach described earlier, as to who will be initially involved in a decision (which parties) and the extent to which they will be involved. Two alternatives are open. First the school board may decide to involve no one: in spite of the fact that a conflict may exist between parties the school board just acts. Perhaps the school board acts out of ignorance, not realizing the potential for conflict, or it acts in an attempt to force its perspective. If the case is salient in the minds of other parties, a conflict may grow and evoke counter mechanisms. This is likely to bring out organized opposition. Grassroots groups may form and react.

In contrast, a school board may seek the involvement of other parties as a strategy to have its own will legitimated. Meetings will be called, parties will be given voice, evidence will be collected, time will be taken to permit dissidents to ventilate their anger, then the institutional party will decide.

For example, an editorial in the Montreal Gazette (June 15, 1982) noted:

> LAURIN DOES NOT LISTEN
>
> So much for public consultation. For nearly a year Quebec Education Minister Camille Laurin has been provoking storms of nervous, negative reaction to his proposed reform of the education system. . . .
>
> Considering how assiduously he has ignored the public voice so far, not much should be expected from another round of consultation. The opposition must become more determined, systematic and informed. The whole community should come alive to this threat, not just to English schools, but to local control of education. . . .

Or, a school board may seek involvement to find a best solution given competing goals. In this instance, a forum and process are provided so that each party can have voice on an issue while the institutional party makes the final decision.

In some instances, as is the case in Quebec's educational system, committees have been formally established to act as consultative forums to insure that parties will be given voice on issues. In a Quebec school for example, one may find a School Council (teachers elected to advise the

principal on the conduct of school affairs), a Parents' Committee (parents elected to advise the principal), and an Orientation Committee (parents, teachers and administrators) to define the school curriculum so that it matches community need.

When one "institutionalizes" participation in this way, it becomes difficult for grassroots groups to emerge because they have already been heard by their "representatives" (so called) on Committee X, Y or Z. However, it is not at all certain that "institutionalized" consultative processes function as intended.

I am not suggesting that these groups always act in a counteracting way - they do function as interacting groups at times - but rather that they are structured to involve several parties.

In a conflict situation we see a "political" process at work. A political process is one where leaders of parties act to insure that their group's goals are met. The tactics include bargaining, persuasion and coercion. The media is often used to "generate" news. Third parties are involved to sway opponents. A multi-pronged shotgun approach is often employed to deluge opponents. Often information is withheld; facts are distorted. Grassroots groups may be formed. Negotiations may take place at several forums.[9]

In a counteractive situation, each party has its own leaders. In such a situation, Long has suggested that the basic concepts used to study the

political process are fourfold, namely: interests, influence, political resources, and strategies.[10] "Structures" and "roles" are excluded. They have value to the extent that they are subsumed within "influence" and "political resources." They must rally their group around their own goal and seak solidarity. To the extent that a group has bargaining power, an ability to concentrate effort and deny services to an institutional party, its goal may be achieved. Again, as in the cooperative situation, a leader who can see "over-the-horizon" and insure that a current goal fits in with the long-term goals of his or her group, and a leader who has tenacity and persistence is more likely to be effective. However, what is productive for one party, at least in the short term, may not be productive for another (a win-lose situation). Personal satisfaction and group cohesion, as outputs of group endeavour, may be closely linked to a group's success. Party leaders, in a losing situation, may have difficulty remaining as leaders.

In summary, a counteractive situation calls for a political leadership style; they mesh. Leaders in such situations can persist only because their personal sentiments coincide with situational demands.

DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP

Two types of situations evident in North American educational settings have been isolated and a suggestion has been made that effective leaders are people who use behavior congruent with the demands of those situations (following the perspective of Fiedler). See Figure 2.

		SITUATION	
		COOPERATIVE	COUNTERACTIVE
LEADER BEHAVIOR	"Concensus"	Congruent	Incongruent
	"Political"	Incongruent	Congruent

Figure 2

In situations that are cooperative in nature, leaders who seek group concensus (in terms of the quality of alternatives and the acceptance of the alternatives) are most effective, while in situations that are more counteractive in nature, leaders who in their actions are more Political and seek their group's goal are most effective. When leader behavior is incongruent, that is, Political in a cooperative situation or Concensus based in a counteractive situation, then the leader will be seen as unauthentic at worst and naive at best, and he or she will in fact be judged ineffective. However, there is an exception.

Leaders may attempt to alter "the situation." Specifically, in a counteractive situation, the leader may try to pull the several parties

together and have them define a common goal, and then move on to cooperative problem-solving strategies. I suggest that this procedure is seen, in North American education circles as an acceptable practice. For a person whose leadership style is concensus oriented, this is a strategy to be employed when confronted with a counteractive situation for it is likely to reduce personal negative sentiments and, concommitantly, enhance satisfaction. Such a leader needs a degree of emotional detachment; the leader must remain calm and collected in the face of the storm.

The practice of altering a cooperative situation to a political one by a leader to suit his or her style is not so evident in North America. In the long term group member satisfaction and cohesion could likely suffer under such conditions.

This view of changing the situation, while problematic, is consistent with W. I. Thomas' notion of the "definition of the situation."[11] People behave according to how they define their situation. However, the situation is a creation, in part, of the very people who are involved in a group - they define their situation. Perhaps a leader can alter their perspective.

An alternative to changing the situation for a leader is to use appropriate behavior (Concensus or Political) based upon situational demands. In short, the leader would have to assess situational attributes to see if cooperation or conflict were more evident and then behave accordingly. This is consistent with Fiedler's theory of leadership effectiveness, however, he worked primarily with interacting groups and assessed specific attributes of their situations -

leader-member relations, task structure, and position power. Herein, the concern of the leader is to determine whether he or she is confronted with a cooperative or counteractive situation.

Dynamic leadership implies that a leader can either attempt to change the situation or change his or her behavior so that congruency can occur and effectiveness emerge. Value is not placed on either approach to problem solving. It is up to the specific group or affiliated institution to state a preference, if it wants to, regarding a favored modus operandi.

While some have advocated that an administrator assume a "mediator" role rather than a Political role in counteractive situations, experience in Quebec indicates that this is impractical; the administrator is often forced to take a position in a debate and thereby be aligned with a coalition.[12] In some instances administrators form their own coalition making the assumption of a "mediator" role impossible.

Let me conclude by noting a remark attributed to Hosea Ballou, a Unitarian advocate in a loyalist congregation in Boston in the early days of the United States independence era.

> "If there be love, no disagreement can hold us apart.
> If there is no love, no agreement can hold us together."

Whether people seek a collective goal or divergent goals, as long as the quality of their interaction is characterized more by trust than enmity either the Concensus or the Political process can prove effective.

REFERENCES

1. Willard Waller, Sociology of Teaching. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1932, p.74.

2. Fried E. Fiedler, A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967, Chapters 1-3.

3. Ralph M. Stogdill, Handbook of Leadership. New York: Free Press, 1974, particularly Chapter 32. Note how Stogdill views productivity, satisfaction and cohesion as three "output" variables based in group endeavour.

4. Victor H. Vroom and Philip W. Yetton. Leadership and Decision-Making. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973, particularly Chapters 1-3.

5. Ibid., p.31.

6. Ibid., p.36. See the text for a detailed discussion on the rules that yield the decision tree.

7. Ibid., p.12. The definition of terms has been slightly modified for this paper.

8. Henry Mintzberg. Organization Power and Goals: A Skeletal Theory. A paper presented for the Policy and Research Conference, Pittsburgh, May 1977, using a similar conception of organization structure.

9. For a more elaborate discussion of this form of political action see Michael Lipsky. Protest as a Political Resource. American Political Science Review, 62, December 1968.

10. John C. Long. Politics and Policy Making in Education. A paper presented at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education conference, Ottawa, June 1982.

11. W. I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki. The Polish Peasant in Europe and America. Boston: Richard G. Badger, 1920.

12. J. H. M. Andrews. Looking Back and Ahead in School Administration. A paper presented at the Canadian Education Association Leadership Course, Banff, 1977.

References (cont'd)

Some perspectives developed in this paper came from two other studies recently completed, namely:

Geoffrey B. Isherwood and Robert M. Taylor. Participatory Decision-Making Via School Councils in High School Journal, March 1978;
Barbara Jean Guard. A Case Study of Grassroots Political Activity in Education. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Montreal: McGill University, July 1981.